

THE COMET.

BY WALTER WILDFIRE.

HIS COURSE HE BENDS
THRO' THE CALM FIRMAMENT ; BUT WHETHER UP OR DOWN,
BY CENTRICK OR ECCENTRICK, HARD TO TELL. MILTON.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1811.

AN EASTERN TALE,

NO MAN IS BORN FOR HIMSELF.

Carazan, the merchant of Bagdat, was eminent throughout all the east for his avarice and his wealth : his origin was obscure, as that of the spark, which, by the collision of steel and adamant, is struck out of darkness ; and the patient labour of persevering diligence alone made him rich. It was remembered, that when he was indigent he was thought to be generous ; and he was still acknowledged to be inexorably just. But whether, in his dealings with men, he discovered a perfidy which tempted him to put his trust in gold, or whether in proportion as he accumulated wealth he discovered his own importance to increase, Carazan prized it more as he used it less ; he gradually lost the inclination to do good, as he acquired the power ; and as the hand of time scattered snow upon his head, the freezing influence extended to his bosom.

But though the door of Carazan was never opened by hospitality, nor his hand by compassion, yet fear led him constantly to the mosque at the stated hours of prayer ; he performed all the rites of devotion with the most scrupulous punctuality, and had thrice paid his vows at the temple of the prophet. That devotion which arises from the love of God, and necessarily includes the love of man, as it connects gratitude with beneficence, and exalts that which was moral to divine, confers new dignity upon goodness, and is the object, not only of affection but reverence. On the contrary, the devotion of the selfish, whether it be thought to avert the punishment which every one wishes to be inflicted, or to insure by the complication of hypocrisy with guilt, never fails to excite indignation and abhorrence. Carazan, therefore, when he had locked his

door, and turned round with a look of circumspective suspicion, proceeded to the mosque, and was followed by every eye with silent malignity ; the poor suspended their supplication when he passed by ; and though he was known by every man, yet no man saluted him.

Such had long been the life of Carazan, and such was the character he had acquired, when notice was given by proclamation, that he was removed to a magnificent building in the centre of the city, that his table should be spread for the publick, and that the stranger should be welcome to his bed. The multitude, soon rushed like a torrent to his door, where they beheld him distributing bread to the hungry, and apparel to the naked, his eye softened with compassion, and his cheek glowing with delight. Every one gazed with astonishment at the prodigy ; and the murmur of innumerable voices increasing like the sound of approaching thunder, Carazan beckoned with his hand ; attention suspended the tumult in a moment, and he thus gratified the curiosity which gave him audience.

To him who touches the mountains and they smoke, the Almighty and the most Merciful, be everlasting honour ! He has ordained sleep to be the minister of instruction, and his visions have reprov'd me in the night. As I was sitting alone in my haram, with my lamp burning before me, computing the product of my merchandize, and exulting in the increase of my wealth, I fell into a deep sleep, and the hand of Him who dwells in the third heaven was upon me. I beheld the angel of death coming forward like a whirlwind, and he smote me before I could deprecate the blow. At the same moment I felt myself lifted up from the ground, and transported with astonishing rapidity through the regions of the air. The earth was contracted to an atom beneath ; and the stars glowed round me with a lustre that obscured the sun. The gate of paradise was now in sight, and I was intercepted by a sudden brightness which no human eye could behold : the irrevocable sentence was past ; and from the evil of my life nothing could be taken away, nor any thing added to the good. When I reflected my lot for eternity was cast, which not all the powers of creation could reverse, my confidence totally forsook me, and while I stood trembling and silent, covered with confusion, and chilled with horror, I was thus addressed by the radiance that flamed before me. "Carazan thy

worship has not been accepted, because it was not prompted by love of God ; neither can thy righteousness be rewarded, because it was not produced by love of man ! for thy own sake only hast thou rendered every man his due ; and thou hast approached the Almighty only for thyself. Thou hast not looked up with gratitude, nor round thee with kindness. Around thee, thou hast, indeed, beheld vice and folly ; but if vice and folly could justify thy parsimony, would they not condemn the bounty of heaven ? If not upon the foolish and the vicious, where shall the sun diffuse his light, or the clouds distill their dew ? Where shall the lips of the spring breathe their fragrance, or the hand of autumn diffuse plenty ? Remember, Carazan, that thou hast shut compassion from thy heart, and grasped thy treasures with a hand of iron : thou hast lived for thyself ; therefore, henceforth, for ever thou shalt subsist alone. From the light of heaven, from the society of all beings, shalt thou be driven ! Solitude shall protract the lingering hours of eternity, and darkness aggravate the horrors of despair." At this moment I was driven by some secret and irresistible power thro' the glowing system of creation, and passed innumerable worlds in a moment. As I approached the verge of nature, I perceived the shadows of total and boundless vacuity deepen before me, a dreadful region of eternal silence, solitude, and darkness ! Unutterable horror seized me at the prospect, and this exclamation burst from me with all the vehemence of desire : " O ! that I had been doomed forever to the common receptacle of impenitence and guilt ! There society would have alleviated the torment of despair, and the rage of fire could not have excluded the comfort of light. Or if I had been condemned to reside on a comet, that would return but once in a thousand years to the regions of light and life ; the hope, of these periods, however distant, would cheer me in the dreary interval of cold and darkness, and the vicissitude would divide eternity into time." While this thought passed over my mind, I lost sight of the remotest star and the last glimmering of light was quenched in utter darkness. The agonies of despair every moment increased, as every moment augmented my distance from the habitable world. I reflected with intolerable anguish, that when ten thousand thousand had carried me beyond the reach of all but that power who fills infinitude, I should still look forward into an immense abyss of darkness, through which I should still drive without succour, and without society, far-

ther and farther still, forever and forever. I then stretched out my hands towards the regions of existence, with an emotion that awakened me. Thus have I been taught to estimate society, like every other blessing by its loss. My heart is warmed to liberality, and I am zealous to communicate the happiness which I feel, to those from whom it is derived ; for the society of one wretch, whom, in the pride of prosperity, I would have spurned from my door, would, in the dreadful solitude to which I was condemned have been more highly prized than the gold of Africa, or the gems of Golconda.

At this reflection upon his dream, Carazan became suddenly silent, and looked up in an extacy of gratitude and devotion. The multitude were struck at once with the precept and example ; and the Caliph, to whom the event was related, that he might be liberal beyond the power of gold, commanded it to be recorded for the benefit of prosperity.

THEATRICAL RECORDER.

No. V.

Nov. 15. *The Honey Moon* and *The Shipwreck*,

For the benefit of Mrs. Beaumont, and her last performance in Boston. We are told that this lady received no salary for the six nights of her engagement, but depended entirely on the profits of a benefit night, for remuneration ; which profits we are told were *shared* with the managers ; and which, we are sorry to say, did not exceed *fifty dollars* !

Nov. 18. *Speed the Plough* and *The Wood Demon*.

This play has been called by some, the best production of Mr. Morton's serio-comick Muse. The compliment, if true, degrades the character of his other plays to a very low rank in the scale of excellence. That it has some wit and some sprightly dialogue cannot be denied. But its wit and sprightliness "are like two grains of wheat in a bushel of chaff." Mr. Morton, it is said has condemned the prevailing taste for German plays ; yet he has in this play, taken advantage of that taste, and erected his superstructure upon a basement of German architecture. A chamber kept locked up for twenty years, to conceal a bloody knife and handker-

chief ;—two brothers that are rogues and villains to each other ;—a wife with two husbands, and a dashing beau betrothed to one woman and in love with another, may be found in almost any translation or imitation of German plays.—Much pains is taken to bring *Sir Philip* and *Morrington* to embrace just as the curtain drops ; and this is called *stage effect*. But there is nothing new nor surprising in the circumstance of two old sinners forgiving each other, and joining issue to hide the rogueries of their youth. It is also an objection that the characters are not original ; and though old friends with new faces are frequently agreeable, yet *Sir Abel* and *Bob handy* have hardly the merit of a new dress to recommend them. They are only a new edition of *Old Rapid* and his son *Neddy*, in another piece by the same author. *Susan Ashfield* is also the *Jenny Oatland* of the same play. *Farmer Ashfield* and his *Dame*, though not more original than the other characters, are the most agreeable, and the scenes in which they are concerned the most interesting of any in the whole piece. So much for Mr. Morton and *Speed the Plough*.

Of the performance we have little to say. Mr. Drake made *Sir Philip Blandford* appear “passing well,” and that is as much as the best actor can do for him. No man can expect applause in the part ; for the multitude seldom applaud any thing but a sentiment or a joke, and *Sir Philip* has neither. Mr. Entwisle’s *Farmer Ashfield* was a true picture of an honest man, and drawn with so much judgement and conformity to nature, that (notwithstanding all objections to the plot of the play,) if it were exhibited *every week*, it ought to attract a house full of spectators.

Where were the managers during the representation of the play ? There was a shameful neglect somewhere ; the scene was kept waiting to an unpardonable length of time for Mr. Duff, and afterwards for Mrs. Mills. These things ought not so to be.

Nov. 20. *The Exile* and *The Midnight Hour*.

For an account of the fable of this operatick melo-drama the reader is referred to the second number of this paper. The performance, will be more particularly noticed in our next.

ORIGINAL POEM.

THE MANIACK.

" 'Twas sad by fits, by starts was wild !"

In yonder cave where bloated lizards crawl,
 And slimy snails hang matted on the wall ;
 Where chilling damp in humid clusters weeps,
 And rankling ivy o'er the arches creeps ;
 Where screaming owls and night's black ravens sit,
 And cloister'd bats around the ruins flit ;
 Where gliding phantoms hold their mystick spell,
 And mumbling witches chaunt their midnight yell,—
 Immur'd forlorn amid the mould'ring cells,
 The pallid victim of distraction dwells.
 Each with'ring look and furious eyeball's glow
 Mark the deep traces of consuming woe.
 Lo ! the sunk cheek, the ghastly face, behold !
 View the sad remnants of the fairest mould.
 Those clotted locks that hang disorder'd round,
 In circling curls his manly temples bound ;
 In him united once the graces shone,
 And expectation mark'd him for her own.—
 Soon travel, want, and cold neglect and care,
 Penance and pain, disease and fierce despair,
 In dread succession follow'd close behind,
 Nor left one vestige of the former mind !
 'Twas thus her snare alluring *Beauty* spread,
 And wove her garlands round his captive head.
 Perfumed groves her honey paths unfold,
 With spring's fresh blossoms and with autumn's gold ;
 Love's liquid strains responsive stole along,
 In fainting cadence breath'd the mellow song ;
 " Ah ! cruel youth," they said, or seemed to say,
 " Unheeding thus, why pass my roseate way ;
 " Why silent thus neglect my secret bow'rs
 " My cooling grottos and my fragrant flow'rs,
 " My nodding orchards and my nectar rills,
 " My crystal fountains and my fruitful hills ?
 " Ah cruel youth ! restrain thy thoughtless haste,
 " Yet deign one sip from amber rills to taste ;
 " Yet deign one primrose from my shade to take,
 " 'Tis *Beauty* asks, and 'tis for *Beauty's* sake !"—
 Th' enchantress ceasing, wav'd her golden hair,

Ten thousand odours caught the yielding air.
As thro' the glades the soft-ton'd marmur flow'd,
Each floweret open'd and each blossom glow'd.—
The dulcet notes on spicy pinions glide,
Now lure the captive and now seem to chide;
Now check his steps, but checking reinspire,
And, adding fuel, feed each latent fire.—
Thus currents, pent by some sudden stay,
Confine their waters and impede their way ;
But, scope regaining, rush with double force,
Receive fresh ardour and impel their course.—
O when the slave is thoughtless led in charms,
In silken chains is bound in *Beauty's* arms ;
Adown the hill of fond delusion led,
On roses sleeping and on fragrance fed ;
Like insects sporting in the summer's ray,
In dreams of rapture melt the scene away :—
Here step by step in devious mazes tost,
His honour sullied and his virtue lost !
Crime after crime awaits the prostrate soul,
'Till one great mischief swallows up the whole !—
O Lyre awake ! and thrill my dying verse,
Portray each horror and each flight rehearse !
Unfold the visions of the frantick mind,
Ride the dark wave and mount the viewless wind !
Speed through the storm where angry breakers rise,
And arrowy tempests flame the wrathful skies.—
Led by thy touch, transport from glooms of night,
To lands of magick and to realms of light ;
Where spring congenial crowns the verdant clime,
And smiles exalting in eternal prime.—
Oft when the fiend the maniac spirit wakes,
And on the slumbers of its vision breaks ;
Aghast and wild along the desert raves,
The thunder threatens and the conflict braves.
Courts the bleak beach where howling tempests roar,
And foaming billows lash the sounding shore.
The struggling pris'ner, lost in eddying maze,
Now thrills in ice, now melts in liquid blaze ;
Now mounts the air, now dives the craggy steep,
And flits the regions of the gloomy deep.
Here holds strange converse in the realms below,
And greets each shadow as it passes thro'.—
On the swift wings of transient visions led,

Alternate phantoms to his fancy spread ;
 Now thro' the paths of flow'ry groves he strays,
 Each nymph attendant round his footsteps plays ;
 Nectareous streams redundant flow along,
 And chorals chaunt him with their tender song.
 Soft on the ear the melting warble floats,
 The lutes responsive catch the magick notes.
 The wondrous sounds like David's harp of old
 Purge the black fiend and break his mystick hold.
 Thro' fancy's eye array'd in varied charms,
 Luxuriant *Beauty* spreads her silken arms.
 Unrival'd here, transporting graces bloom,
 And nature op'ning breathes her fresh perfume :
 Rich clust'ring vines mid autumn's golden bow'rs,
 Unite their jucies with the woodbine flow'rs,
 Hills, woods, and plains in joyous union ring,
 And glow extatick in unceasing spring !
 To pluck the sweets with longing hand he tries,
 But ah ! each tempter from his touching flies ;
 Again he grasps to fold the luring fair,
 Yet still he grasps a phantom of the air.
 Thus the doom'd wretch in parching fever stood,
 Above his neck amid the copious flood,
 In vain desir'd the tempting stream to lave,
 In vain implor'd the tantalizing wave ;
 Still on it roll'd and swell'd, th' enticing pool,
 Nor gave one drop his burning tongue to cool !—
 The maniack raving with distraction's ire,
 His bosom heaving and his eyes on fire ;
 Grasps the frail phantoms as they glide away,
 In shadows vanish and in gleams decay.
 Now distant murmurs strike the list'ning ear,
 Promiscuous blasts in fitful streams appear ;
 Comingling thunders fierce contending rise,
 And mission'd lightnings heat the wrathful skies.
 Swift thro' the gloom, that cloaks the marly bog,
 Dart the grim secrets of the stifling fog,
 Black from the caverns of all-mantiing night,
 Burst the dun spectres on the startled sight.
 The smiling mask that treach'rous *Beauty* wears,
 Commanding Justice from her visage tears.
 Conceal'd beneath Medusa's front appears,
 His hundred heads the venom'd Hydra rears.
 Here baleful Envy shakes her snaky hair ;

Close stalks behind the ghastly fiend Despair.
With *creeping flesh* wild Horror shrieking stood,
With ragged locks uprear'd, and frozen blood.
Next red Revenge, with nostrils spreading broad,
And threatening brand with fated victims gor'd,
Grinding his teeth, his eyeballs black with fire,
Startling with frenzy and convuls'd with ire.
Then pale Remorse, with measured step, and slow,
With brow of anguish and with soul of woe,
His heart's best blood the gnawing vultures prey,
And serpents hissing thron' the dreary way.
Then tot'ring came Disease, wasted and grim,
With ling'ring pace and paralytick limb ;
Meagre and lean his foetid form decay'd ;
A haggard phantom and a goblin shade ;—
From his foul nostrils fum'd the putrid breath,
Rank with contagion and surcharg'd with death ;
Whilst from his mouth the clammy mucus roll'd,
Alive with vermin and with nausea foul'd.
Now Suicide, the biform'd hag, was seen,
With rusted dagger and with famish'd mein ;
A glass she bore, which oft, with frantick glance,
With rolling eye and stealing look askance,
Its face she sought, yet still with frenzied view
Reverted oft and back with terour drew.
Grim Slaughter furious drives her ebon car,
And waves her ensigns o'er the wrecks of war ;
Whilst Carnage smiling stalks o'er mangled bones,
And ghastly joyous, lists the dying groans.
Here Rapine fell erects his scaly crest,
And Plunder, scowling, grins upon his breast.
High o'er the van Alecto's wild fire gleams,
Hurls her red torches and her blazing streams ;
Outthum'ring fiends in wild succession rear,
Fierce tumult shaking from their horrid hair,*
And breathing plagues torment the smould'ring air.
On sulph'rous waves the ugly Harpies ride,
Begirt with storms the lava billows stride
And whelming chaos rules the troubled tide—
Starting aghast the shiv'ring maniack stares,
Whilst round his head conflicting tumult glares.

* “ *And from his horrid hair shakes pestilence and war.*”

His hair uprearing in disorder flies,
 And scalding tears burst hopeless from his eyes ;
 Along the waste in furious transport raves,
 The shout prolonging echoes thro' the caves ;
 Now sudden halts, in death-like silence stands,
 Rooted his feet and clench'd his quiv'ring hands ;
 Now frantick laughs and with convulsive cries,
 His piercing voice despair's wild energies,*
 Thus dares the Dæmons and the host defies.
 " Hell breathing fiends !" the feverish wretch exclaims,
 " Discharge your tortures and consume your flames :
 " Hurl your red bolts, your hissing serpents fling,
 " Arm'd with strange horrors and the smarting sting
 " Tear the strong pillars of the vaulted sky,
 " Each mountain root and burn old ocean dry ;
 " Lay waste creation and let chaos come,
 " To shake her ashes and confirm her doom ;
 " Myself, secure amid your blazing war,
 " Will laugh to scorn your elemental jar,
 " Behold ! the seas and rolling waves divide,
 " And ope the flood-gates of their mystick tide.
 " Conceal'd beneath I trace my guardian road,
 " Amid the chambers of the secret flood,
 " Not far beyond the shining palace stands,
 " Not seen by mortals and not made by hands,
 " Whose golden portals, dazzling far and wide,
 " Invite the pilgrim from on ev'ry side ;
 " Thro' the bright paths the blissful land is seen,
 " With autumn's fruits and spring's eternal green :
 " There vital suns with genial splendours blaze,
 " And life and light spring mutual from their rays,
 " There the bright chorus tune the living lyre,
 " Wake to bold numbers and the saints inspire ;
 " Myriads uncarnate with incessant praise
 " Their incense offer and their voices raise ;
 " Legions unnumber'd, countless seraphim,
 " Unceasing render and uniting hymn.
 " Already now methinks their strains I join,
 " Their choirs harmonick and their songs divine.
 " Flow swift, ye streams ! urge on your wat'ry way ;
 " Ye currents speed ! revive your dull delay,
 " I plunge my passage to immortal day."—

* "*Her voice Despair's wild energy.*" MARMION.

Then headlong leaping from the rugged steep,
 The waves receive him in their silent deep !—
 As by the floods the sportive Sea-Nymphs glide,
 And gently floating skim the trembling tide,
 Their sounding shells in varying numbers flow,
 Now weep in anguish, now in madness glow,
 Now hollow sounds in doles of deep despair,
 Despondent mingling steals along the air,
 The sighs, slow dying in a tender tone,
 In murm'ring accents sink a fainting moan,
 Lull'd in deep sleep the drooping chords decay,
 In soft vibration melting, die away !
 Now sudden bursting from the lifeless lyre,
 The nerve of rapture and the soul of fire,
 Rocks, shores and woods with loud succession ring,
 And transport leaping starts from ev'ry string.
 Thus the wild minstrels of the mystick shell,
 Wake the sad numbers of their fountain-kneil ;
 And should the whirlwinds o'er the waters sweep,
 Their rage command, and make the furies sleep,
 The surges check, and bid the torrents roar
 And break their billows on a distant shore.
 For here the Zephyrs and the streams repose,
 Here thoughtful silence broods her pensive woes,
 The willows here their languid branches bend,
 And round the brink their emblem shades extend ;—
 Here o'er pale Grief the dismal cypress spreads
 Its sombre brows, and night-contagion sheds,
 Here Sorrow ling'ring marks the eve-star beam,
 The glow-worm twinkle and the silv'ry gleam,
 Alternate sparkle glaze the mirror stream :
 Here dew-drench'd garlands weeping Naiades lave,
 Their tributes bathing in each reflux wave,
 That, lightly passing, skim the wat'ry grave.

R.

NEW DISCOVERIES.

Of the latest discoveries of the Russian travellers, that of an island in the Icy ocean, by Syrawatskoi, a merchant, deserves particular notice. Hendenstrom, the Russian naturalist, who has recently examined this island, which has received the appellation of New Siberia, found there bird's claws a yard in length ; and the

roving Jakutes related that they had sometimes found feathers there, the barrel of which was capable of admitting a man's clenched fist. Thus these polar regions, which have yielded those gigantick bones of the class of mammalia, known by the name mammoth, have likewise preserved similar relicks in the department of ornithology, whose authenticated existence may, perhaps, at some future period, afford a key to the fables of the griffin and the great bird on the mountain of Caf.—

SIMPLE PAT.

In London, poor Pat, having spent harvest wages,
 Soon felt, to his grief, how an empty paunch rages ;
 And puzzling his pate, how to conjure a dinner,
 On loan begg'd a passenger for a *thirteener* ;
 The stranger eyed Pat, and exprest some surprize,
 That a person he never had seen twixt his eyes,
 From him, quite *unknown*, should a loan ask of money.
 "Fait now that's just the *raison*," cries Pat, "my dear honey,
 Because you ne'er saw me, I thought you'd be willing,
 For no one that knows me, will lend me a shilling."

ON AN HOUR GLASS.

How changing all things earthly prove
 This hour-glass well may show :
 That part which stands one hour above
 The next is placed below.

ON SLEEP.

In sleep we seem in death to lie ;
 Yet sweetly pass the moments fleet ;
 That death is bitter mortals cry ;
 And yet they own its image sweet.

☞ The length of the Original Poem, which we this day publish, and a wish to give the whole at once, must be an apology for the want of variety in this paper. It will perhaps be read with greater interest than the lighter articles which it has excluded.